

# Social Change Resulting from the Implementation of Inclusive Communication Approaches for the Marginalised Villagers in Central Java Indonesia

*by Nuryanti Nuryanti*

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# Social Change Resulting from the Implementation of Inclusive Communication Approaches for the Marginalised Villagers in Central Java, Indonesia

**2**uryanti<sup>a</sup>, Subejo<sup>b\*</sup>, Roso Witjaksono<sup>c</sup>, Mochamad Fathoni<sup>d</sup>, <sup>a,b,c</sup>Program Extension and Development Communication, Universitas Gadjah Mada, Indonesia, <sup>d</sup>Program Extension and Development Communication, Universitas Gadjah Mada, Indonesia, Email: <sup>b\*</sup>[subejo@ugm.ac.id](mailto:subejo@ugm.ac.id)

The presence of new media as a medium for empowering rural communities brought many changes as well as new problems. The fact that not all communities had communication technology tools, (called marginalised villagers,) is a new problem when every village is required to have a village web, as happens in Susukan Village, Central Java, Indonesia. Therefore an inclusive communication approach is needed that allows village communities to access information from the village web. This approach allows for positive social change. By using qualitative methods, this study explains how social changes occurred in the Susukan village community after an inclusive communication approach.

**Key words:** *New media, empowering, inclusive communication, social change.*

## Introduction

Communities are described by Comte as a group of living things that have new realities and develop according to their laws and with their own patterns (Syani, 2007). Based on the Comte perspective, human development is what causes humans to experience changes in every phase of life. Changes that occur in social life are often called social changes.

When they first came to Susukan Village, Susukan Subdistrict, Banyumas Regency, Central Java to collect preliminary data, the researchers received information, both from village officials and villagers regarding the existence of an inactive village website. Village web is a



media that must be owned by every village, because this is mandated by Village Law in Indonesia. Its presence raises several new problems for villages that are not ready; one of them is Susukan Village in Central Java. An inactive village web is caused by several factors, one of which is because the manager or village web administrator has no ability in the IT field and lacks involvement from related parties.

At first the village apparatus felt the village web was not important but over time the village officers began to feel its importance as a conveyer of village information needed by the village community. Moreover, in relation to the transparency of the use of village funds as public information that must be delivered to the community, village web now has a strategic role for the village apparatus. There was new awareness from some village officers, those who did not know the existence of the village website. When they knew, they wanted to be able to optimise and revitalise the website again. In addition, from previously resistant to be able to accept it because of these interests and perceived needs.

On the other hand, there is the problem of the ability to access information by some villagers of Susukan Village. It was discovered that these marginal villagers were illiterate and did not have communication technology tools to access the internet or new media. The conditions in these marginal communities require a different approach that allows these groups to access information contained on the village web. After going through a series of Focus Group Discussion (FGD) and in-depth interviews with stakeholders and the community, a simple method was obtained that allowed information contained on the village web to be conveyed to this group.

The most important outcome in the FGD between the community and village officials was the decision to form a village web team who later acted as the social change agent for the Susukan villagers. The main step taken by the village web team to open up access to information for the marginalised villagers was to adopt an inclusive communication approach. This was to provide an information board as an intermediary media source that allowed the community to get information from the village web. This study explains how social changes occurred in marginal villagers after the installation of information boards, as an implementation of an inclusive communication approach, in the Village of Susukan, Sumbang, Banyumas, Central Java, Indonesia.

## Literature Review

### *Social Change*

Change is a universal factor in social life, there is no society without change (Sztompka, 2012). Various changes in society have for a long time become an important focus for



sociology studies, under the name of social change. The definition of social change, from Rogers (1988), stated that it is interpreted as the process of change in the structure and function of society. Rogers defines society as a collection of individuals and social groups that perform different functions and work together in solving problems to achieve common goals. Meanwhile, structure is defined as a pattern of relationships between individuals and social groups, while the consequences arising from these relationships are called functions (Rogers, 1988).

In other languages social change is also referred to as a development (Servaes & Lie, 2013). Hettne (2001) emphasises that development includes structural transformation which presupposes cultural, political, social and economic changes. The study of community change is often referred to as social change, which according to Sztompka (Martono, 2012) involves three things namely: the study of differences, studies at different times, and observations on the same social system. When social researchers make observations on a social system at different times to see the changes that occur, then the research can be categorised as a study of social change. While a leading Indonesian sociologist Soekanto (2010) argued that social change occurs because of changes in elements that maintain the balance of society, such as changes in geographical, biological, economic or cultural elements. Then, there are those who argue that social changes are periodic and non-periodic.

The theory of social change in the view of Haferkamp & Smelser (1992) contains at least three main elements that are interrelated to one another. The first is structural determinants of social change, such as population changes, dislocations caused by war or tension and contradictions. The second is the process and mechanism of social change, including the trigger mechanism, social movements, political conflicts and accommodation, as well as entrepreneurial activities. The third is the direction of social change, including structural changes, effects and consequences. With these three elements, the analysis of social change will be comprehensive because it is analysed from the beginning before there is a change to the outcome or impact of the change.

The targets of social change are grouped into three levels namely, individuals, groups and structures. Firstly individuals as targets of social change can involve individuals as agents of change; the basic assumption is that individuals who have changed will affect social order. In addition, individuals are the smallest component in the social system. Therefore, changing individuals is relatively easier than changing groups of individuals or society as a whole. Secondly the group as a target or intermediary for change. The basic assumption used is that changes in atmosphere will affect individual changes. Values, attitudes and behaviour of individuals will be changed through changes in social structure or through changes in groups into which individuals think and act. Thirdly changes at the structural level include changes



in social class division systems, changes in vocational aspects of community members or changes in norms and values (Martono, 2012).

Giddens structuration theory aims to overcome the agent-structure duality by stating that there is a dialectical relationship between agents and structures (Lubis, 2014). Giddens (1984) states that one of the main propositions of structuration theory is that the rules and resources are raw in the production and reproduction of social action while at the same time in the means of system reproduction (the duality of structure).

Giddens states the main proposition of the theory of structure is that the rules and resources drawn in the production and reproduction of social action are at the same time a means of the reproductive system (structural duality). The concept of structure according to Giddens refers to the rules and resources. While rules refer to procedures that govern how agents (individuals) should act. The agency or actor refers to the capacity or ability of the actor to take action; people who are concrete in the continuous flow of actions and events in the world. The structure in Giddens is more empowering, enabling social practices to occur (Martono, 2012).

### *The Emergence of New Media*

In the development of media history, new media theories formally emerged in the 1990s along with the development of information technology in the form of the internet. The emergence of new media has previously been predicted in the theory of the second media era, which argues that television audiences will no longer be passive because technological advances will in time cause television audiences to participate actively. Holmes (2005) states that the internet stands out as a comprehensive world of techno science that exemplifies cyberspace.

With a variety of sub-media, the internet has the ability to facilitate complexity and it offers network media that is unmatched in its potential and scope. Mark Poster in reference to second media theory states that the internet will be an alternative media as a solution in the broadcast model that allows a system where producers, distributors and consumers vary (Littlejohn & Foss, 2009). The greatness of the internet is certainly a necessity, but in fact the internet can only function properly if people have the ability to access it. Likewise with new media in the form of a village web, this has different consequences when used as a medium of communication among people who have limited internet access. It means that the village web, with great character as new media, cannot be utilised by the audience.

If grouped by approach, old media or the era of first media tended to use the approach of social interaction, while new media uses the approach of social integration. The social





interaction approach emphasises the transmission of information that reduces the likelihood of interaction, while social integration in new media is more interactive and creates new tastes in personalising communication (Littlejohn, Foss & Oetzel, 2017).

### ***Empowerment and Inclusive Communication Approach***

The concept of development, that prioritises the process of community empowerment, will create active community participation in development. The process of participation and empowerment is closely related and can be studied through awareness theory. According to Freire, being human means to establish relationships with others and with the world around them as objective realities that do not depend on anyone. Integration with the environment is different from adaptation. Freire said a person is not complete if he loses the ability to choose, if the choice is someone else's choice, and if his decisions come from outside and are not his own decisions. Integration arises from the ability to adjust to reality, plus the critical ability to make choices and change reality. Furthermore, intact humans are humans as subjects, while humans who adapt are humans as objects (Waskita, 2005).

The empowerment process is in line with the empowerment stages which include awareness, capacity building and empowerment (Wrihatnolo & Dwidjowijoto, 2007). The awareness stage builds the community's right to know their needs and their right to have something. The capacity building stage is done to enable the community and to give them power. Empowerment is done by giving power, authority or opportunity.

Empowering communities, especially rural communities, in accessing the internet requires a different approach from other empowerment. Marginalised people who do not have communication technology tools to access the internet in the form of a village web can be empowered with an inclusive communication approach. Jones (2013) suggests that inclusive communication can be understood as an approach that seeks to create a supportive and effective communication environment by using various means of communication that are available and so that the information conveyed can be understood.

Although the emergence of an inclusive communication approach was born from efforts to build communication with children with special needs, especially in the field of education, it is now a communication approach for developing marginal community targets in various cases. The term that first emerged was inclusive teaching or inclusive education, where inclusive was meant as creating a learning environment that could be accessed by all students by creating learning methods that were varied, challenging and relevant to educational activities (Pascal-Beaudoin, 2013). Gradually, this approach was interpreted as an effort to open equal opportunities for everyone. In relation to access to information on the village web, an inclusive communication approach can be used as a step to help marginalised



communities obtain information from the village web by using intermediary media according to their abilities.

## Methods

This study uses a qualitative approach with the Participatory Action Research (PAR) method. The position of the researcher in carrying out the PAR method is as an observer. It is as a participant in the sense that the researcher makes observations while participating in what the data source is doing. Researchers in this study were external actors who acted as facilitators involved from the problem exploration stage to the execution stage of problem resolution which was carried out together with the Susukan Village community.

Collecting data in qualitative research, including PAR, can be done: in natural settings (natural conditions); primary data sources; and with more data collection techniques such as participant observation, in-depth interviews and documentation (Sugiyono, 2016). Data collection methods include through participatory observation techniques, interview techniques, literature study and FGD.

## Result and Discussion

Social change can be said as a change in the function of culture and human behaviour in a society from certain circumstances to other conditions (Syani, 2007). Whereas Ritzer (in Sztompka, 2010) writes that social change refers to variations in relations between individuals, groups, organisations, culture and society at a particular time. From these two definitions it can be concluded that to see the social changes that occur you must compare the state of behaviour of relations between people and their culture today with the previous situation. If there are differences in the circumstances compared, it is said that social change has occurred in the community.

The social changes analysed in this study are changes in the social practices of the Susukan villagers in accessing information from the village web. The flow of social changes that occurred in Susukan Village began when researchers showed the results of a pre-survey related to the village web in the FGD between the villagers and village apparatus on 8 March 2018. The pre-survey results showed that 80% of Susukan villagers did not know that they had a village website that could be used as one of the media for village empowerment and development and most of the people do not have communication tools to access information from the village web.

The villagers together decided that they needed certain agents or parties to help them understand and be able to use the village web. The party or agent is expected to be a special



team of local villagers, a village web team<sup>2</sup> tasked with managing the Susukan village web while providing alternative media to access the village web. At that time, the social practice<sup>2</sup> of making changes by the Susukan community was based on the desire to be able to access information from the village web through displaying information on alternative media (information boards).

Due to social changes in Susukan, including deliberate changes, there is an agent of change in process. The village web team, assistants and researchers are the parties involved who want change in accessing information through the village web. Hook (Sztompka, 2010) states that the occurrence of social change is the achievement of actors and the result of their actions. Therefore it can be said that social change in Susukan is a result of the actions of the Susukan villagers that was initiated by the agents of change initiators. The village web team is the main agent of change for social change in Susukan, which consists of the Susukan villagers itself. This agent is the result of the initial structure of not knowing that their village had a village web and they were indifferent to its existence. These agents, in carrying out social practices in changing Susukan, are influenced by motivation to give understanding to the Susukan villagers about the benefits of accessing information from their own village website.

Gidden (1984) states that agents of change can be realised from within individuals, not from the collective life that wants change. This is consistent with what happened in Susukan Village. The community collectively wanted change and this was revealed in the FGD and several interviews. But the desire to change it will only be a discourse if not executed by individuals, so it takes the role of agents that arise from individuals. The village web team is a collection of several individuals who have the same desire to change the social practices of the Susukan community from being indifferent to accessing and utilising the village web into a caring community who is willing to access information from the village web. The awareness that arises in the web agent or team is called by Giddens (1984) as discursive awareness. Priyono (2003) explains Giddens's discursive awareness as our capacity to reflect and provide a detailed explanation of our actions. The same is true of the Susukan Village web team, who wanted a change so that the Susukan community is motivated and can access information from the village web. Also that they use it even though they do not have ICT tools, becoming a more empowered community.





**Table 1:** The Flow of Social Change in Practical Inclusive Communication in Susukan Village.

Initial condition	Social change flow	Final condition
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Communities cannot access information through the village web directly because of limited access on new media or ICT tools and limited knowledge of ICT uses (low literacy on ICT).</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Agent discursive awareness.</li><li>• Change agents provide various knowledge on the village web.</li><li>• Agents explore problems and solutions expected by marginalised people.</li><li>• Problems found and solution execution.</li><li>• Installation of information boards.</li><li>• Socialisation of villagers and related parties.</li><li>• Monitoring reflection.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• People who are able and willing to access information from the web through media that is affordable by marginalised communities, namely by using information boards.</li></ul>

**Source:** Primary Data Analysis (2019)

After the change agents in Susukan carried out the action of inviting the community to access the village web, it was followed by monitoring the condition of the community. Sometimes the web team asked the villagers what their wishes were for content on the information. The web team also evaluated their response to the contents of the information boards, whether they could use the information in their daily lives and so on. This is done so that the main purpose of social change remains controlled. This action is called monitoring reflection Giddens (1984).

## Conclusion

Based on aspects of the process of occurrence, social changes in Susukan Village included planned or intentional changes. This is because the social changes that occur in Susukan Village require initiation from certain parties. The initiator is an agent of change whose actions are influenced by his rationality and the impetus of the structures around him. Like any deliberate change in general, social changes in the Susukan village impacted the conditions of the marginal community in the Susukan Village. They initially only accessed information using traditional or direct media because they could not access information through the village web directly. This was due to limited access to new media or ICT tools and limitation of ICT knowledge (low ICT literacy) to be able and want to access information from the web through media that is affordable and suitable for marginal villagers.



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